

SECTION 13. PERFORMANCE AWARDS

13-1. Policy on employee performance awards.

- (a) The CAO may grant an award to a merit system employee for noteworthy or extraordinary performance under the standards established in this section.
- (b) The OHR Director must administer monetary and non-monetary employee awards programs.
- (c) A department director must administer approved awards programs for a department under these Regulations.

13-2. Monetary awards.

- (a) ***Employee Performance Award.***
 - (1) ***Award type.*** The Employee Performance Award is a lump sum cash award.
 - (2) ***Eligibility.*** Merit system employees who meet the criteria are eligible.
 - (3) ***Award criteria.*** Criteria are:
 - (A) outstanding performance during a 12-month period; or
 - (B) work of exceptional quality on a special project.
 - (4) ***Limitations.*** The following limitations apply to this award:
 - (A) a department director must not grant more than a maximum of 2-4 percent of base salary to an employee in a fiscal year; and
 - (B) a department director may grant this award to a maximum of 6 percent of department employees, but small departments may grant a maximum of 2 awards even if that would exceed 6% of employees in the department.
 - (5) ***Nomination procedure.*** A division chief must make a written recommendation to the department director documenting the reason for the award.

(b) ***Special Recognition Award.***

- (1) ***Award type.*** The Special Recognition Award is a lump-sum cash award.
- (2) ***Eligibility.*** MLS employees are eligible.
- (3) ***Award criteria.*** Extraordinary public service provided during an emergency such as a natural disaster or extended period of severe weather.
- (4) ***Limitations.*** A Special Recognition Award must be funded by the employee's department and not from the money appropriated for performance-based pay.
- (5) ***Nomination procedure.*** The award must be recommended by the employee's department director and approved by the CAO. It may be approved in addition to an increase to base salary or a lump-sum award based on the employee's overall performance during the prior rating period.

(c) ***Department Employee of the Year Award.***

- (1) ***Award type.*** The Department Employee of the Year Award is a lump sum cash award.
- (2) ***Eligibility.*** Merit system employees are eligible.
- (3) ***Award criteria.*** Criteria include:
 - (A) exceptional or noteworthy performance for an extended period of time;
 - (B) completion of a special project requiring unusual skill or effort; or
 - (C) similar or comparable achievement.
- (4) ***Limitations.*** A department director must not award more than \$250 net pay per employee in a fiscal year.
- (5) ***Nomination procedure.*** A division chief must make a written recommendation to the department director documenting the reason for the award.

(d) ***Department Recognition Award.***

- (1) ***Award type.*** The Department Recognition Award is a:
 - (A) lump sum cash award; or
 - (B) non-cash award such as a restaurant gift certificate or theater tickets.
- (2) ***Eligibility.*** Merit system employees are eligible.
- (3) ***Award criteria.*** Criteria include:
 - (A) noteworthy performance;
 - (B) special effort that results in a significant product, action or efficiency improvement; or
 - (C) another employee action, activity, or product that is valued and appreciated by the department.
- (4) ***Limitations.***
 - (A) A department director must not grant more than \$100 net pay to an employee in a fiscal year.
 - (B) A department director must not grant non-cash awards with a cost or value of more than \$100 to an employee in a fiscal year.
- (5) ***Nomination procedure.*** A division chief must make a written recommendation to the department director documenting the reason for the award.

(e) ***Outstanding Performance Increment.***

- (1) ***Award type.*** The Outstanding Performance Increment is a:
 - (A) 1-3 percent addition to the annual base salary of an employee whose position is assigned to a salary schedule with a minimum and maximum salary for the grade; or
 - (B) one-step increase for an employee assigned to a step salary schedule.
- (2) ***Eligibility.*** A merit system employee who meets the criteria and whose salary is not at the maximum of the pay grade is eligible.

- (3) **Award criteria.** The criterion is sustained outstanding performance during 2 consecutive 12-month periods that demonstrates a quantity or quality of work significantly exceeding requirements.
 - (4) **Limitations.** The following limitations apply:
 - (A) the employee must have received the highest possible performance rating for the 2 consecutive 12-month periods;
 - (B) an employee may only receive one outstanding performance award in a 24-month period, unless an exception is approved by the CAO;
 - (C) the employee's salary may not exceed the maximum for the employee's grade.
 - (5) **Nomination procedure.** A department director must make a written recommendation to the CAO documenting the reason for the award.
- (f) **Annual Leave Award.**
- (1) **Award type.** The Annual Leave Award is an amount of annual leave or paid time off for employees who receive paid time off.
 - (2) **Eligibility.** Merit system employees are eligible.
 - (3) **Award criteria.** Criteria include:
 - (A) sustained or unusual effort on a special project;
 - (B) outstanding or noteworthy performance on a sustained basis or for a special project.
 - (C) other actions, activities, or products of importance and value to the department.
 - (4) **Limitations.** A department director may grant up to a maximum of 40 hours of leave per employee in a fiscal year.
 - (5) **Nomination procedure.** A division chief must make a written recommendation to the department director documenting the reason for the award.

13-3. Procedures for monetary awards.

- (a) A department director must:
 - (1) recommend to the CAO an Outstanding Performance Increment for an employee in the department, and if granted, prepare the documentation for processing;
 - (2) for all other monetary awards:
 - (A) review and evaluate all awards recommended for the department, ensuring that the type and amount of award are commensurate with the performance or product being recognized;
 - (B) determine which awards to approve; and
 - (C) provide all required award information to OHR.
- (b) The OHR Director must:
 - (1) record an employee's award information in the employee's official file;
 - (2) send an employee's award information to the Finance Department's Payroll Section for processing;
 - (3) collect from departments information about awards granted by the department in a fiscal year; and
 - (4) report to the CAO at the end of a fiscal year a department's total:
 - (A) cash awards;
 - (B) non-cash awards with an individual value of more than \$50; and
 - (C) hours of annual leave granted as awards.
- (c) The CAO must determine whether to grant an Outstanding Performance Increment.

13-4. Honorary awards. Honorary awards are non-monetary awards.

- (a) **Montgomery's Best Honor Awards.**
 - (1) **Award type.** Plaques or other tokens of appreciation are given annually for the following awards:
 - (A) Award for Exceptional Service;

- (B) Employee of the Year Award;
 - (C) Employee Representative of the Year Award;
 - (D) Customer Service Award;
 - (E) County Partnership Award;
 - (F) County Diversity Award; and
 - (G) Executive's Safety Award.
- (2) **Eligibility.** Depending on the award, merit system employees, volunteers, residents, private organizations, and employee representatives are eligible.
 - (3) **Award criteria.** The general criterion for these awards is exceptional effort to support the County's programs and guiding principles.
 - (4) **Limitations.** Some awards are limited in number.
 - (5) **Nomination procedure.** All County employees and volunteers may submit written nominations for awards and the reason for the nomination. Peer groups will evaluate the nominations and make the selections.
- (b) **Length of Service Awards.** The CAO may give length of service awards to recognize longevity in County employment.
 - (c) **Other honorary awards.** The CAO may establish other non-monetary honorary awards.

13-5. Gifts or awards from a civic group or similar organization.

- (a) An employee may accept an honorary award from a civic group or similar organization.
- (b) Under Section 19A-16 of the County Code (Appendix C), an employee may not accept a monetary award.
- (c) An employee should direct a question about whether a gift may be accepted to the Ethics Commission.

Editor's note – The subjects covered in this section of the Personnel Regulations are addressed for bargaining unit employees in the current collective bargaining agreements as indicated below:

Bargaining unit	Articles of current agreements with references to performance awards
Firefighter/Rescuer	5, Management Rights 33, DFRS Awards Committee
OPT/SLT	2, Management Rights
Police	5, Tech Pay 29, Physical Fitness Awards 49, Awards 50, Reduction-in-Force and Furlough 53, Performance Evaluation 55, Job Sharing Program